

ISLAND PLAN

CHARTING THE FUTURE OF THE VINEYARD

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Island Plan Steering Committee

Held on Thursday, January 31, 2007, 5:00 p.m.

In the Stone Building, 33 New York Ave., Oak Bluffs, MA

IN ATTENDANCE (P = Present; - = Absent)

P John Abrams	- Ned Orleans	P Henry Stephenson
P James Athearn	P Kerry Scott	- Paul Strauss
P Tom Chase	P Linda Sibley	P Richard Toole
- Steve Ewing	- Elio Silva	- Woody Vanderhoop
- Ann Floyd	- Russell Smith	- Susan Wasserman
P Ray LaPorte	P Bret Stearns	

Staff: Mark London (Executive Director), Christine Flynn (Affordable Housing & Economic Planner), Jo-Ann Taylor (Coastal Planner), Bill Veno (Senior Planner)

The meeting started at 5:10 pm

1. Announcement

Jim Athearn notified the Committee that Prudy Burt has stepped down.

2. Minutes

Minutes of the last meeting of the Steering Committee, November 30, 2006, were approved as presented.

3. Proposals from Process Committee

The Process Committee had met with the Work Groups chairs and liaisons on January 29, to assess how to have some preliminary ideas available for public comment for the summer of 2007. The following recommendations were made to and approved by the Steering Committee. (For more detail, see the minutes of the Process Committee of Jan. 29 and its appendix.)

Template for Synopsis Document – A format for collecting and organizing material to create consistency among the Work Groups, the synopsis document would include an overview and general discussion of the topic as well as providing detailed goals, objectives and strategies for each sub-topic. The document is intended to help Work Groups, the Steering Committee, and the

Process Committee

Meeting Notes of January 11 & 13, 2007, MVC & South Mountain

Present - Members: John Abrams (Chair), Jim Athearn, Ned Orleans, Susan Wasserman, Mimi Davisson (1st meeting), Tom Chase (2nd meeting), Ann Floyd (2nd meeting)

Present – MVC Staff: Mark London, Bill Veno (1st meeting), Christine Flynn (1st meeting)

The Committee met twice to take stock of where we are and to propose priorities for the next few months. The work groups are well underway, but will need some coordination to help focus their work. We need to outline the work of the Steering Committee, and other efforts. The following is a summary of the conclusions of the Process Committee and is recommended to the Steering Committee for discussion and adoption at the meeting planned for the end of the month.

1. Steering Committee Work and its Relation to Work Groups

- 1.1 Some of the “big ideas” – namely impact of global/regional forces, sustainability, protecting the Vineyard’s character and identity, thinking about the relative Island-wide and town roles in implementation – are not necessarily topics on their own, but should be part of the efforts on every topic.
- 1.2 Some “big ideas” – next economy, Island-wide/town, and Vineyard identity – are or may be dealt with by current or future work groups.
- 1.3 The next priority for the Steering Committee – in addition to its ongoing coordination of work groups and the overall process – is to focus on development management. This could include issues such as: neighborhood preservation and change, where residential and other development should take place and be limited (e.g. possibility of growth areas in town or in new areas, allocation of land for various types of development versus preservation), having new development fit appropriately into its surroundings; seeing development not only as a dominant threat but also a dominant opportunity.
- 1.4 We should set up a subcommittee of the Steering Committee, with a few other people added, to organize the work on development management.
- 1.5 We should organize all our work, including the work groups, to complete a phase by late spring, so it can be shared with the larger community during the summer (e.g. new exhibit, flyer, etc.).
- 1.6 The next Saturday-morning meeting of the Steering Committee, tentatively March 10, should be carefully planned and focused.

2. First Results

- 2.1 Each work group, and the Steering Committee for development management, should identify a few bold ideas (innovative ideas that could really make a big difference in the long term) as well as one or two low-hanging fruit (relatively easy to achieve in the short term).
- 2.2 These would be the major elements that would be shared with the general public next summer.

3. Work Groups and Synthesis Template

- 3.1 Though it was useful to have each work group start out by feeling its own way about how to structure the material it is dealing with, we should now standardize the format for this work with a standard synthesis template, based on what has emerged in all the groups. This will give each group a template for its work and will make it easier to pull all the material into a coherent whole. (John, Tom, Ned, and Mark will meet next week to work on a possible synthesis template.)
- 3.2 We should hold a meeting of the Process Committee and chairs/liaisons of each work group in the next two weeks to discuss the first results (bold ideas and low-hanging fruit), the synthesis template, and other issues of work groups including: general progress, membership of the core (suggestions for adding and subtracting members), relation between the core and full work group, etc.
- 3.3 We should start the next set of work groups after Labor Day. We should definitely set one up on transportation. The other topics might change depending on how the process has evolved by then.
- 3.4 We should ask Linda Sibley, Paul Strauss, and Mimi Davisson, to play a special role in bringing Island Plan concerns to the work of the County Study Commission, of which they are members.

4. Steering Committee Subcommittees and Membership

- 4.1 The Membership Subcommittee is inactive, and could be reactivated when new work groups are formed.
- 4.2 The Communications Subcommittee has not been very active. It could be incorporated into the Process Committee, adding a member or two with particular interest in this.
- 4.3 We might consider changing the membership of the Steering Committee at the end of the spring. People who don't want to participate at that level could be replaced with a few people who have been active in work groups.

5. Outreach

- 5.1 Members of the Steering Committee should reach out to all Selectmen and a few members of each Planning Board on a one-on-one basis, as soon as possible. We should prepare a list of talking points.
- 5.2 We need to decide when to meet planning boards. One option is to meet them in February, asking for their input particularly about a topic (e.g. what are the real impacts for their town of applying the general principle of limiting development in rural areas and focusing growth in compact, mixed-use, in-town locations?). Another option is to wait until later in the spring, when we have formulated a complete preliminary set of proposals, and seek their reaction to it.

- 5.3 We should identify what other means can be used to keep the general public informed and involved, and to keep the process transparent. In that the volunteer time of Steering Committee members is limited, this might largely fall to staff. We could have some kind of presence at Town Meetings. There could be conversations in libraries about various topics. There could be newspaper articles with differing points of view on issues, and/or about best practices elsewhere.

6 Staff

- 6.1 We have to ensure that staff is provided the needed support. Basically, its role is:
- Administrative support for meetings – agendas, minutes, logistics;
 - Help committees sort out the mass of available material on each topic (past plans, forum and survey results, discussions at group meetings, etc.);
 - Assemble best practices from other places;
 - Future trajectories – for each topic, estimate where we will be in twenty, or fifty, years if present trends continue; be prepared to estimate what the impact would be of adopting various policies,
 - Help implement and oversee specific studies.
- 6.2 Each work group chair/liaison should tell Mark about specific work needed from staff.
- 6.3 Mark proposes that we set the target that meeting minutes be completed two working days after each meeting and sent to participants, who would then have 48 hours to review them. The staff person and group or committee chair should also set the agenda of the next meeting. This way, the final minutes and the agenda for the next meeting can be sent out within a week of each meeting.
- 6.4 Mark has asked the staff members working on the Island Plan – Bill Veno, Jo-Ann Taylor, Christine Flynn, and Bill Wilcox – to, as much as possible, limit the time devoted to their other responsibilities to be able to put in more time on the Island Plan in coming months. He is also thinking of hiring another part-time employee to work exclusively on the Island Plan.

7 Fundraising

- 7.1 Additional funds are needed to pay for studies, facilitation, printing, part-time staff, interns, etc. We should kick the fundraising into gear (now that we have enough of a track record to demonstrate credibility and the potentially controversial MVC hospital decision is out of the way).
- 7.2 The priorities are to revise the fund-raising letter, to pull together the supporting material, and to hold a meeting of those who offered to write covering notes (Tom, John, and Kerry) to make a first selection of names. The list will then be sent to the whole Steering Committee who will be invited to select additional names.

public keep abreast of the progress and latest information on each Island Plan topic. Importantly, the synopsis would include ideas that have yet to be discussed as well as those that have been agreed to. Each Work Group is to compile an initial synopsis by the beginning of March.

Bold Ideas and Low-Hanging Fruit – Each Work Groups will also identify one or two “low-hanging fruit” (actions that could happen quickly, without significant funding, infrastructure or regulatory challenges) and one or two “bold ideas” (bigger, longer-term, inspirational, somewhat audacious changes). They will also start identifying these by early March.

Status of Work Groups – The Steering Committee heard brief status updates from each Work Group. All seemed to be roughly at the same point; the synopsis documents will be instrumental in better assessing progress. The following core members of different Work Groups have had to resign: Marge Harris from Housing, Phil Hale from Livelihood and Commerce. The Steering Committee appointed Caroline Fenske to the Livelihood and Commerce Work Group Core and Sharon Strimling Florio and David Nash to the Energy and Waste Work Group Core. Steering Committee members discussed whether some Cores needed more members; some Cores are quite large already. Some Cores have adopted the practice of just drawing-in people with particular expertise for certain periods of time. The Committee affirmed that it is open to considering appointing additional Core members in the future provided they remain of a manageable size and well-balanced.

3. Development Management and Land Use Subcommittee

The Steering Committee appointed a subcommittee to focus on the topic-crossing issue of development management and land use. Its mandate is to help the Steering Committee (and the community) frame the discussion of the physical dimensions of future growth, addressing issues including protecting the character of traditional neighborhoods, where new growth should be focused, the harmony between new construction in their natural or neighborhood surroundings, and the trade-off between competing land uses.

Appointed to the subcommittee were Henry Stevenson, Jim Athearn, Tom Chase, Ned Orleans and Kerry Scott of the Steering Committee, as well as Christina Brown.

4. Outreach and Communications

The Outreach and Communications Subcommittee will be reactivated to work with staff in identifying and carrying appropriate measures to involve members of the Network of Planning Advisors, town boards, and the general public at particular milestones throughout the planning process. The membership is comprised of Linda Sibley, Jim Athearn, Kerry Scott, Mimi Davisson, Susan Wasserman, and Elio Silva. Linda will convene the next meeting and would be willing to serve as chair if that is the will of the members.

The Steering Committee discussed the need to aggressively pursue input from town boards. Rather than speak informally to individual members of town boards, the Committee decided it better to have a few Committee members meet with each Board of Selectmen, asking that other town boards be invited to attend and participate. The purpose of the meetings will be to give a brief status report, but mainly to get the ideas and concerns of town boards and to promote dialog with

the towns. Staff is drafting a brief list of accomplishments and the current progress of the Island Plan effort. These meetings should begin in February to complete prior to annual Town Meetings. We must be vigilant in being inclusive and encouraging all points of view.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be a work session on Saturday morning, March 10.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm

Prepared by Bill Veno